

**VINTAGE
PROFILE**



**GERMANY 2005: Golden October (Part I: Mosel and Saar)
October 31, 2006**

When I arrived in Germany the last day of July, 2005, I quickly encountered a consensus regarding the evolving crop. "It can't end up being any less than good," was what I heard and what my walks in the vineyards confirmed. The vines were in robust health, having not experienced the stress from heat and drought that has become such a familiar feature of recent vintages. Pest pressures were low. Maturation was a week or two ahead of long-term averages. The crop was small, bunches generally loose, and the berries relatively small. It seemed impossible to imagine a scenario that would nullify such potential. As it turned out, Mother Nature sorely tested that hypothesis. The day after I arrived, it turned cool and rainy. Most growers welcomed this as insurance against vine stress. But I did not see sunshine again for fifteen days, and the growers little of it for more than a month. In the end, 2005 became not just a good vintage but an outstanding one and for many growers a great vintage. The weather warmed and brightened in September, but in the middle of that month, widespread, heavy rainfall precipitated early and unwelcome botrytis in warmer regions, even with normally late-ripening Riesling. The relatively cool Mosel, Saar and Ruwer benefited at this point from having Riesling skins less ripe and susceptible to rot, and steep, well-drained and -ventilated vineyards.

Even during a relatively cool, rainy period in late summer, vines do not merely mark time. A considerable amount of phenolic maturation and gradual accretion of sugar takes place. And well watered conditions are always associated with high extract. If one takes the broad view, insists Thomas Haag, "the growing season, which was a constant mix of warmth, rain, cool periods, and sunshine, all bringing us in around average" at the onset of harvest, was a source of the complexity and balance, the density and sheer juiciness in the resultant wines. "It was a good thing that the summer was not too hot," says Willi Schaefer. "If it had been hot, the wines would have been too heavy and filled one up too quickly." As Hans-Leo Christophel of Ürzig says, "With Riesling it can rain all it wants" particularly, if the weather is cool? "provided

that eventually the sun returns." In 2005, it returned for an entire, glorious month of October. Those regions and growers whose grapes had avoided botrytis until that point were in a position to wait a week or two before harvesting, and gradually a noble botrytis evolved that would for many growers become the hallmark of the vintage. Levels of acidity were generally healthy, but in the course of the month, grower's experiences diverged. Most found their grapes losing acidity in the warm weather, but in some areas, particularly on the Mosel, Saar and Ruwer, something unusually felicitous happened.

"At the beginning of October," relates Hanno Zilliken of the Saar, "we had golden yellow fruits with thin skins. We put great stock in botrytis and we stopped spraying early because we want botrytis. The skins of our grapes were very sensitive when the warm breezes arrived and so they shriveled. There wasn't a drop of rain for nearly three weeks, and that makes for the straight character of the wines." Zilliken recorded rapid, record-shattering accumulations of sugar, but also acidity as he picked throughout the warm, dry period. "There was lots of sun and lots of wind," relates Bernhard Schug of Dr. Loosen, "and we had shriveling of healthy, golden berries. I've never seen this before? In the Wachau, yes, but not here in Germany." Why this phenomenon was not more widespread and in particular why it was experienced at the same time when many other grower's grapes were rapidly losing acidity. I cannot explain, but certainly the health of the fruit going into October as well as the ability to complete the harvest by the end of that month were critical factors. It is in instances where this concentration of sugars and acidity went hand in hand that many of the greatest wines of vintage 2005 were harvested.

Typically, sugar levels were uniformly high, with relatively insignificant differences in Öchsle separating what was chosen to bottle as Kabinett, Spätlese, or Auslese until one set about selectively picking for botrytis, at which point astronomical levels of sugar were possible, and indeed there has seldom been a vintage, not even torrid 2003, in which so many Riesling Trockenbeerenauslesen were harvested. Widely forecast rain at the beginning of November created a challenge for the many growers who had fruit left to gather and botrytis already rapidly spreading. There was a great rush by many to finish picking, indeed, several told me they were too rushed to reflect on just how high a quality of fruit they were in fact harvesting. (But soon after the wines began fermenting, they started getting goose bumps.) Some toughed out this period and harvested fascinating wines until the middle of November, but scant few of the most striking wines of the vintage were picked then. As testimony to the rapidly deteriorating

conditions, scarcely any grapes were left hanging this year in anticipation of Eiswein, and the rare instances bottled were seldom successes. "Botrytis is what made the character of the year," says Daniel Vollenweider, and to the extent that this was the case, it is hardly surprising that there would be variations in quality from site to site and wine to wine corresponding to the capricious and two-sided nature of rot, noble or ignoble. Many experienced growers, though, remarked on some of the finest botrytis since 1971 and bottled superb testimonies to that assessment. Johannes Selbach did not argue about its quality, but only its importance for the vintage. "To me, this is not really a botrytis year," he asserted, pointing out that in the best cases only a fine dusting of botrytis affected fruit already concentrated and in some instances desiccated. "Botrytis," he concludes, "was just the icing on the cake. The principle carriers of flavor were juicy golden berries."

Sheer abundance of sugar did not always mean good fortune. At times, dry 2005s betray their higher than normal alcohol in heat. Sheer excess of sugar in the grapes could present an impediment to liveliness or elegance in the finished wines, with Auslesen routinely pushing 10% alcohol and still possessed of residual sugar that their remaining acids had difficulty in taming. "One could easily handle an extra percentage point of alcohol in 2005," asserts Thomas Haag, whose wines were noticeably high in residual sugar, "but one dared not push it." In the main though, particularly along the Mosel, Saar and Ruwer, we have a vintage capable of achieving, as Thomas Haag continued, "a perfect combination of huge concentration, density, and sap on one hand, and, on the other, wonderfully ripe acidity with interplay of flavors, elegance, and finesse." This marriage of richness with elegance, density with lightness of touch has made for many wonderful, age worthy Rieslings that should take their place among the best vintages of recent times. Where acid levels were concentrated through desiccation, one encounters wines of Eiswein-like clarity and construction. But even in the more common instances where acid levels were marginal, as veteran Moselaner Bruno Schmitt (who didn't begin harvesting until the third week in October) remarked, "You can still feel the acidity in the finish of these wines," lending the best of them infectious juiciness and vivacity.

Whether through air drying or botrytis, the crop was significantly reduced during October from its already modest-to short levels. (Erratic flowering, frost, and hail had been the spring culprits.) In the final analysis, yields were typically down by 25-35% among top Riesling growers. This, plus the quality of the resultant wines, has put

pressure on prices, and on consumers to purchase early in order to secure the ostensibly top wines of the vintage. A not insignificant number of the best wines in the upper echelons of Prädikat, however, will not be released until late 2006 or in 2007. And given what I have observed both of the time it takes to get wines to the U.S. market under the best of circumstances and the large number of often outstanding 2004 vintage Rieslings still in the marketplace, I suspect it would be foolish to panic save in the case of wines from a few small, superstar estates. Quality at most of the best Mosel-Saar-Ruwer addresses is so consistently high that there is an embarrassment of gems from which to choose.

Exciting though the 2005 vintage is, it would be wise to view it from a perspective unique in the long and well-recorded history of German viticulture. The last time there was a vintage when sugar levels dipped below the long-term average was 1987. Since then, viewed from a pre-1988 or 100-year perspective we have had nothing but vintages in which all of the Rieslings are above average, at least in must weight. (2000 is the only poor vintage since 1987, but not for lack of sugar!) "When I began growing here twenty-five years ago," remarks first generation vintner Erich Weber of the Saar (where 2005 has turned out especially well), "we had on average 1,100 hours of sunshine and if we had more than 1,200 that was a lot. Last year, we had 2,100 hours. We're Saar-Tuscany?!"

The notes that follow cover the Saar and Mosel. Because of the overwhelming number of successful performances in Germany's "green bottle" regions, **the balance of my notes from the Mosel and those from the Ruwer will appear in a later issue, along with notes on wines from the Mittelrhein, Nahe, Rheingau, Rheinhessen and Pfalz growing regions.** All of the wines covered, with the exception of several collections sent to me as samples, were tasted in the course of my late July and August visits to 84 German estates and are generally listed in the order in which I was presented them. Following standard *Wine Advocate* conventions, wines tasted prior to bottling are given a parenthetical point spread rather than a specific score. Those seeking clues for unraveling the often lamentably convoluted nomenclature of German wine are urged to consult page 49 of [Issue #161](#).

—David Schildknecht

Fritz Haag

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Spätlese -Rating: 90 points

The 2005 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Spätlese smells of apple blossom and ripe honeydew melon, comes to the palate with juicy apple, melon, and subtle honey and herb inflections, and launches into an expansive, rich, quite sweet, yet elegant finish with melon, apple, and peach augmented by sweet herbs, pungent brown spices, and stone-kissing slate. Strikingly glossy – almost buttery – in texture, this Spätlese nevertheless retains invigorating sap and refreshment value. Here is one of this year's Juffer wines from newly-acquired parcels on the border with the Juffer-Sonnenuhr. "This is my darling this year," remarks Wilhelm Haag. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Spätlese Trocken - Rating: 89 points

With his 2005 Brauneberger Juffer Spätlese trocken, Oliver Haag aimed for a "clearer, more filigreed Spätlese" even though he says he could not avoid botrytis berries. Apple, clover, and grapefruit aromas lead to a palate saturated with fresh apple, quince, and grapefruit exhibiting precisely the transparency of fruit for which Haag was aiming and a consequent perception of wet stone minerality that lends authority to the wine's finish. Capturing vivacity and fresh-fruitedness of this sort in the inherently rich, soft, and both extract- and botrytis-rich vintage of 2005 – above all in a dry Mosel wine – was not easy. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese A P #10 Rating: 95 points

2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese A.P. #10 – originating, as usual with this A.P. #, in deeper soils with more fine particulate slate than the #6 – enters a realm where almost custardy, lush richness of texture coexists with fresh berry, pit fruit, and citrus juiciness – in this instance above all cassis, white peach and pink grapefruit – and clarion transparency. At the same time, an incredible lightness of touch to the palate and wafting delicacy set this wine up for a soaring finish of remarkable length and purity of fruit. Certainly botrytis was here, but it got away, leaving only the most subtle and noble of traces in the sheer extra measure of honeyed concentration to the fruit. Lemon cream, pink grapefruit, cassis, honey, and white peach preserve set the tone here from the nose to the finish. "To combine this richness and botrytis with elegance and finesse is the beauty of 2005," remarks Oliver Haag, and it is hard to offer a better summation of this particular Auslese, one I would want to follow for another quarter century or more (if I thought I would hold up half as well as the wine!). —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese A P #6

Rating: **93 points**

The 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese A.P. #6 offers scents of nectarine, white peach, and quince, a glossy, polished palate with abundant inner-mouth florality and underlying nut cream and vanilla character, and an imposing degree of interplay between fresh and ennobled fruit elements and salty and alkaline minerality that is missing from many 2005s. A refined, subtly persistent finish exhibits striking clarity of fruit and transition to mineral nuance that is uncommon in a botrytis-influenced Auslese. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A P #13 Rating: **93 points**

An auction lot, the 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A.P. #13 – harvested in a parcel from which the most fully-botrytised fruit had already been picked for higher-Prädikat wine – smells of apple jelly, marzipan, and white raisin. In the mouth, a measure of fresh apple and tart apple skin lends liveliness to what is otherwise a very rich, fat impression. An envelopingly rich, long, honeyed, palate-saturating finish completes this rather statuesque expression of 2005 ripeness and nobility, a wine certainly capable of at least a quarter-century's positive evolution. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A P #15 Rating: **94 points**

A wine destined for auction, the 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A.P. #15 exudes an especially heady, sweet lily- and gardenia-like florality along with aromas of plum preserve, grapefruit, and apple jelly. In the mouth, this offers juicy citrus and fresh orchard fruit character layered with jellied fruits, an oily, glycerin-rich thickness of botrytis, honey, and subtle suggestions of caramelized fruit. “This was incredibly clean, healthy botrytis,” says Wilhelm Haag, “there were no spores of fungus,” and it certainly shows. The glossiness of texture and intensely rich diversity of honey-drenched fruit essences cling vividly to the palate. The ripeness and botrytis here say “Beerenauslese” but its elegance, juicy fresh fruit preservation, and stylistic fluidity are what marked it in the minds of the Haags as “long gold capsule Auslese.” Then, too, they had to bear in mind what was yet to come from this vintage. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese

Rating: **98 points**

The 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese smells of honey-drenched grilled nectarine wreathed with flowers and sweet herbal essences. It displays the most remarkably custard-like combination of creaminess and almost chewable extract that I have ever experienced in a young Mosel. Like others of the best Fritz Haag 2005s, this Riesling manages to incorporate fresh, juicy nectarine, peach, lime, and grapefruit into its many layers of fruit concentrate, so that for all of its thickness and botrytised super-ripeness it remains invigorating and lip-smackingly refreshing. It also manages – again in the manner of the best 2005s – to preserve a sense of delicacy, for all of its ennobled richness and viscosity. Diverse flowers and herbs, nut paste, malt, honey, and salt all add further complexity to the layers of fruit so impressively on display here, leading to a finish of extraordinary length, refinement, and persistence. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese A P # 7

Rating: **91 points**

A 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese A.P. #7 smells of apple, quince, and grapefruit, offers a richly fruited yet particularly juicy, clear, and almost weightless palate impression, and finishes with juicy fresh apple, grapefruit, and melon, hints of ennobled botrytis honey, and liquid slate. This fine, pure nectar should be a 20-year keeper at the least. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese A P #14

Rating: **92 points**

This year's auction Spätlese, 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese A.P. #14, hints at white raisin and pure botrytis secretions in the nose, and saturates the palate with ripe but fresh peach and honey while offering a sleek, refined palate impression and a welcome abundance of fresh, juicy fruit that carries into a finish of noteworthy richness as well as refreshment. The ability exhibited here to combine a subtle and noble expression of botrytis with retention of vivacity and sap – a trick even more strikingly executed by the best Fritz Haag Auslesen – is what makes for some of the greatest successes of vintage 2005. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese Trocken

Rating: **88 points**

The 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese trocken smells of citrus oil, toasted nuts, and ripe apple. Toasted nut, citrus zest, and apple skin lend a

faintly bitter note to an expansive palate of glossy, waxy texture and satisfyingly juicy citricity. A zesty, pungent, wet-stone suffused finish evinces a faint note of bitterness, perhaps in part from botrytis and sheer extract. Imposingly rich, voluminous, and enveloping though this is, it lacks at least for now the balance and charm of its generic little sibling. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Riesling Auslese Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr #12 (Gold Capsule) Rating: 95 points

The 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A.P. #12, whose slatey origins resemble those of the A.P. #10, offers fascinating aromas of black tea, honeysuckle, and quinine, along with more predictable quince preserve. Remarkably clear and pure on the palate with sweet honeysuckle and lily inner-mouth florality, plus hints of licorice, vanilla, and tea accenting a quince and peach fruit essence, this superbly refined Riesling lays down a magic carpet of finishing complexity while uniting intensity of flavor and sheer extract with a wafting, levitating sense of delicacy. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Riesling Trocken Rating: 89 points

The 2005 Riesling trocken, which unites fruit from Brauneberg and Graach, is once again a model of its type, offering lovely aromas of ripe white peach, apple blossom, and lightly toasted nuts, a creamy richness in the mouth, with grapefruit citricity and noticeable levels of residual CO₂ helping to enhance its vivacity, and a palate-saturating spread of fruit and wet stone minerality. Enjoy this anytime over the next half dozen years. (The 2001 kept getting better until I drank my last bottle six or eight months ago.) —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A P #9 Rating: 93 points

Scents of over-ripe pear and musk melon rise from a glass of the 2005 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A.P. #9. In the mouth, this positively drips with a condensed concentration of sweet floral perfume, along with grilled pink grapefruit and honey-drenched pear and melon. Almost gaudy in comparison with its siblings and decidedly softer and more overtly sweet, it finishes with peach, pear, and quince preserves of compelling concentration and clarity, even if its nectar-like emphasis on extremely ripe fruits and heady florality leave no apparent room – at least at this stage – for mineral nuances. Ernst Loosen is fond of saying that a great Mosel Auslese should be like a hamster in its youth, storing up fat and sugar for a long sleep. To the extent one trucks with that metaphor, I cannot imagine a better illustration, and I would wait at least a

decade before pulling the next cork on this Auslese and commencing a further 20 years of satisfying contemplation. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Rating: 88 points

The 2005 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett continues along stylistic lines set by Wilhelm Haag and mentioned in connection with this year's "feinherb" rendition, namely to exhibit delicacy and drinkability without too much sweetness. White peach and apple in the nose are reinforced on a gentle, expansive, peach- and apple-dominated palate. Subtle slate and floral nuances break through in the finish, along with a significant amount of sweetness helping to cover slight hints of bitterness, but overall this still exhibits delicacy and lift and genuine Kabinett drinkability. —David Schildknecht

2005 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Feinherb

Rating: **91 points**

The 2005 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett feinherb is a masterful model of true Kabinett, proving that even in this ripe vintage, a relatively delicate expression of a great Mosel site is possible at a modest (here 18 gram) level of residual sugar. Aromas of white peach, tarragon, and nut oils lead to a beautifully clear-fruited, slate-saturated palate with lip-smacking juiciness, lift and vivacity, and lovely, wafting hints of sweet herbs and flowers. A gorgeous finish of slate, nut oils, and white peach exhibits a perfect balance in which (as Terry Theise is memorably wont to put it) sweetness is not noticeable, but neither is its absence. One can certainly plan to enjoy this anytime over the next decade, and indeed I expect it will take on added complexity during that time. In consideration of both that fact and its potential at table, this would be near the top of my own shopping list from vintage 2005. —David Schildknecht

Reinhold Haart

2005 Reinhold Haart Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A P #14 Rating: 95 points

A 2005 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A.P. #14, slated for auction, smells of pineapple, pink grapefruit, and apricot preserve as well as of a pungently smoky legacy of botrytis. Creamy, smooth, and rich yet amazingly light in touch and subtle in flavor on the palate, it adds flavors of black currant and apple to the themes of pineapple, grapefruit, and apricot fruit, all shadowed by a hint of caramelization and wreathed in floral and herbal distillates. The refined, long finish here preserves both the creaminess and the sense of near-weightlessness that characterized the palate as well as supplying ample

portions of lusciously juicy fresh fruit. This astonishingly balanced, terrifically rich, yet almost feather-light Auslese is certainly a 40-year wine that will gain in complexity, though probably not over short intervals. A Beerenauslese and two Trockenbeerenauslesen (one from the Ohligsberg) were still fermenting when I visited! —David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Riesling Auslese Piesporter Goldtröpfchen

Rating: **93 points**

The 2005 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese smells of black currant, candied grapefruit, white raisins, and mint. Glossy in texture and impressively mouthfilling, with Golden Delicious apple and caramelized mirabelle, it still retains juicy bright citricity and an underlying firmness of sheer extract and wet stone minerality. A long finish enhances the impression of opulence yet retains elegance and lift and refreshing citricity, incorporating notes of black tea, bitter-sweet flowers, a tactile tinge of botrytis spice, and a genuine hint of slate. Here is a strikingly youthful Auslese of both richness and vigor that should improve for 25 or 30 years. —David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A P #13

Rating: **93 points**

The Haarts' 2005 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A.P. #13 smells of Golden Delicious apple, black currant, and honey. In the mouth this is glossy, faintly oily and rich, yet with ample brightness, mingling apple, honey, and lemon, with exotic, high toned inner-mouth esters. Lemon meringue, apple jelly, and apricot preserve drizzled with honey inform the long, intense finish of a wine that will doubtless age longer and at an even slower pace than the "regular" Goldtröpfchen Auslese, but is not likely to be any more complex.

—David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Piesporter Grafenberg Riesling Spätlese

Rating: **92 points**

The 2005 Piesporter Grafenberg Riesling Spätlese comes from a small, steep parcel of red slate whose terraces Theo Haart rebuilt, whose shy-, tiny-berry-bearing vines (from a Württemberg clone) he planted a decade ago, and which he has only this year deemed worthy of a separate bottling. Scents of pineapple and white peach tinged with brown spices and black tea set the themes for a subtly creamy yet insistently fresh-fruited palate. Lovely, subtle suggestions of pistachio cream and honey enfold pineapple, tangerine, and peach fruit in a finish of striking refinement, delicacy, and persistence. Any readers looking for a first-time wine with which to start building an outstanding and almost certainly age

worthy collection should latch onto some bottles of this Grafenberg.
—David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Riesling Spätlese Piesporter Goldtröpfchen

Rating: **92 points**

Given the quality of this year's Spätlesen that immediately preceded it, I felt as though the 2005 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese had something to prove about this great site. Above all, it seemed to demonstrate that the Grafenberg and Goldtröpfchen are very distinct in character. In this Goldtröpfchen we have a Spätlese much more opulent and abundant in fruit character, but without the delicacy or refinement of the Grafenberg. Floral and herb distillates, fresh apple, pink grapefruit, lemon curd, and pineapple are among the bold diversity of aromas that soar from the glass. On the palate, honeyed richness and juicy refreshment are both manifested in a kaleidoscope of fruits. Subtly tart fruit skin and distinctively wet stone manifestations of slate add further complexity to the finish as well as assisting in the restraint of what is analytically very high residual sugar. The record shows that a Haart Goldtröpfchen this stuffed with fruit will evolve over 20 or more years.

—David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Piesporter Domherr Riesling Spätlese

Rating: **91 points**

The 2005 Piesporter Domherr Riesling Spätlese smells of pineapple, honey, and hints of sage and white raisin. An attractively delicate yet subtly creamy and palate-saturating meld of pineapple, quince jelly, ripe pear, and sweet herbal essences leads to a juicy though subtly smoky, botrytis-inflected finish. The subtle complexities and complementary fresh and botrytised charms of this wine will grow on those who give it time and attention in the glass. It makes for lovely drinking now but should mature positively for 15 or 20 years.

—David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Riesling Kabinett Piesporter Goldtröpfchen

Rating: **90 points**

The 2005 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Kabinett smells of pineapple, grapefruit, and blueberries. At once luscious and creamy, yet light and refreshing on the palate – and with notes of wet stone and petrol accenting the fruit – this Kabinett from some of the earliest-harvested and lightest raw material available, and still possessing nearly the same must weight as the corresponding Spätlese and 9% finished alcohol, nevertheless conveys a true Kabinett sense of delicacy and refreshment, elegance and lift. A long, refined finish of grapefruit and black currant underlain by slate completes the picture of a wine that will surely reward tasters for a dozen or more years. —David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Piesporter Riesling Spätlese Rating: 90 points

The Haarts' generic 2005 Piesporter Riesling Spätlese features pineapple, pink grapefruit, cassis, and blueberry with touches of vanilla and licorice. Another juicy and refreshing yet subtly creamy and quite rich Haart 2005, this finishes with a delightful layering of honey, nut, and vanilla cream, and vividly fresh apricot, pineapple, and grapefruit. Once again at this address, we have here a wine of uncanny balance and an outstanding value that any taster will be amazed to see revealed as a generic bottling. —David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Piesporter Kreuzwingert Riesling Spätlese Feinherb Rating: 89 points

The 2005 Piesporter Kreuzwingert Riesling Spätlese feinherb – from one of the smallest remaining official vineyard sites in all of Germany (whose 1971 owner was a powerful politician!) – smells of baked apple with piquant accents of walnut oil and grapefruit zest. In the mouth, this exhibits juicy refreshment, balanced sweetness subtly supporting its flavors of apple, black currant, grapefruit, and walnut oil, and it finishes with bright, spicy grapefruit citricity tinged with faintly bitter citrus zest and brown spices. —David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Piesporter Riesling Kabinett Rating: 89 points

The Haart generic 2005 Piesporter Riesling Kabinett – more than half of it made up of Goldtröpfchen – plays vividly juicy yet very ripe pineapple against baked apple and a hint of textural creaminess. Touches of CO₂ impinge invigoratingly on the palate, only adding to the overall impression of refreshment conveyed by this unusually bright 2005. Delicate hints of wet stone and faintly bitter citrus rind and apple skin are deftly woven into the whole and fit this wine's vigorous overall character. —David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Wintricher Ohligsberg Riesling Spätlese

Rating: **89 points**

Ripeness and rot are regular refrains from this site, so it comes as little surprise when the Haarts' 2005 Wintricher Ohligsberg Riesling Spätlese rises from its glass with pungent spice and more than a hint of volatility. Apple and pear laced with honey and studded with lemon zest and pungent spice provide the underlying themes as this Spätlese walks on the wild side, all the way to a still spicy, pungently nippy, honeyed, and faintly volatile finish. Will it settle down with time? It's fascinating and stimulating stuff, but I wouldn't put more than a couple of bottles away as an experiment. —David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Riesling QbA Haart To Haart Rating: 88 points

At 95 Öchsle, the fruit that informed the Haart's 2005 Riesling "Haart to Heart" – and resulted in a wine of 11.5% alcohol – was the starting point for this vintage! Scents of grapefruit and pineapple are followed by juicy bright expressions of those same fruits – with the residual sugar supporting but not intruding – on a creamy palate. A fine, sappy finish incorporates grapefruit zest, toasted nuts, and wet stone. —David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Piesporter Riesling A P #1 Rating: 87 points

The 2005 Piesporter Riesling A.P. #1 is the bottling he refers to as "trocken," although legally it's not. Piesport-typical aromas and flavors of grapefruit, nut oils, and black currant take center stage in this dense, plushly textured, and satisfyingly long Riesling. This hides its 12.5% alcohol nicely. There is an unusual but not unattractive aura of malo-lactic fermentation here, but while the wine is relatively soft, its fruit remains clear and juicy, and at six grams per liter total acidity it is higher than quite a few 2005s that did not go through malo. — David Schildknecht

2005 Reinhold Haart Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Rating: 87 points

Haart's wine labeled simply 2005 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling is another dry-tasting (and legally trocken) Riesling weighing in at 12.5% alcohol, in other words, effectively an example of the genre "Grosses Gewächs." Aromas of black currant, kumquat, and grapefruit lead into a relatively full-bodied palate saturated with citrus, black currant, and wet stone minerality. There is an impressive sense of sheer stuffing here that – along with its generosity of fruit and vigorous acidity – largely overrides this wine's slight tendency to finishing bitterly. More clarity may well come in the short run as this had not been in bottle long when I tasted it. —David Schildknecht

Mönchhof

2005 Weingut Robert Eymael Mönchhof Riesling Spätlese Ürziger Würzgarten Rating: 90 points

The 2005 Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese smells of honey-drenched strawberries. A juicy, relatively low-acid palate features ripe melon, strawberry preserves, and the honey and spice of botrytis. For all of its ripeness and rot as well as its greater sweetness and mouthcoating amplitude, this is even more refined and lighter in touch than its sibling Spätlesen. An imposing finish maintains a correspondingly uncanny balance between fat and finesse. —David Schildknecht

2005 Weingut Robert Eymael Mönchhof Riesling Auslese Ürziger Würzgarten Rating: 89 points

More successful than a very soft corresponding Treppchen, Eymael's 2005 Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Auslese exudes peach jam, nectarine, and pear nectar, a honeyed botrytis cast, but also a generous remnant of fresh fruit juiciness is preserved on the palate. The stately finish is marked by the same fruit and honey character, long but rather single-mindedly ripe and ennobled, lacking much dynamic interplay of flavors but very clear and pure. —David Schildknecht

2005 Weingut Robert Eymael Mönchhof Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese Feinherb Fass #33 Rating: 89 points

The 2005 Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese feinherb Fass #33 (I mention the cask number not because there is another Spätlese feinherb here this year, but because it is displayed prominently on the label) smells of banana and strawberry chiffon. Rich and ripe, creamy in texture, and with noticeable but restrained sweetness from its 24 grams residual sugar, it manages to preserve a lovely sense of lightness. A hint of caramel in the finish serves as further reminder of the vintage ripeness and noble rot, but the striking sense of delicacy and refinement remains. —David Schildknecht

2005 Weingut Robert Eymael Mönchhof Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spätlese Mosel Slate Rating: 88 points

Eymael's 2005 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spätlese "Mosel Slate" boasts a new label with a vivid representation of a fist-sized chunk of red Treppchen slate. Thankfully, the wine itself is just as vivid as the label, but lighter and more delicate, as befits the potential of the vintage. Generously packed with ripe citrus fruit, creamy and light on the palate, this Spätlese finishes with vanilla cream and orange, supported by a surprisingly but suitably discrete sweetness. —David Schildknecht

2005 Weingut Robert Eymael Monchhof Riesling Auslese Erdener Pralat Rating: 88 points

The 2005 Erdener Pralat Riesling Auslese offers aromas of pineapple and blood orange. Subtly creamy and refined but rather understated on the palate, it tastes of birch beer, pineapple, saffras, orange, and malt, leading to a soothingly rich, spicy but not fresh-fruited finish. Eymael's Erdener Pralat Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese was enormously ester-filled and peachy in the nose, not heavy, but unconvincingly soft and gooey on the palate – at least at the stage when I encountered it. —David Schildknecht

Schloss Lieser

2005 Schloss Lieser Riesling Beerenauslese Niederberg Helden

Rating: **96 points**

The 2005 Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Beerenauslese displays intense aromas of pear nectar, quince preserves, and apple jelly, foreshadowing a palate that features quince preserve with pear and apple butter with a creamy – indeed almost buttery – texture. At the same time, a juicy refreshment, refinement, and elegance are all hallmarks of this wine, which does not, up until this point, betray its botrytis save in virtue of its extreme ripeness and concentration. Subtle notes of spice and rivulets of honey emerge in a finish of incredible purity, utmost refinement, and almost ethereal delicacy. Indeed this takes the gravity-defying aspect of the best 2005s to a glorious extreme. While doing so might not be proof against your decline in old age, I would lay some of this in my cellar confident of 30 or more years of periodic astonishment and self-indulgence. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A P #11

Rating: **95 points**

Destined for auction is Haag's 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A.P. #11. Smelling of apricot jam, quince jelly, and high-toned florals, this displays pure clear melon as well as jellied and fresh quince and apricot in a refined conjunction of textural creaminess and palate-tingling brightness. A subtly oily cling of intense, pure jellied fruit concentrate coincides with an uncanny sense of delicacy and ravishingly refreshing fresh fruit essences. At this level of concentration and Pavlovian connection to the salivary glands, one almost entirely forgets the wine's sweetness. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A P #9

Rating: **93 points**

Haag's 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A.P. #9 displays a clarity, polish, and refinement that go well beyond any of the preceding wines. Aromas of melon, honey, and flowers lead to a richly ripe, quite viscous, yet elegant, delicate, pure, and persistently juicy palate. Featured flavors include melon, apple, vanilla cream, and inner-mouth florality. The counterpoint of creamy richness and bright fresh fruitedness is striking, and the wine's length formidable and amazingly fresh and juicy considering the influence of botrytis and the wine's enormous ripeness. Any of these gold capsule and long gold capsule Auslesen look likely to make it past the age of human adulthood without a misstep, but none is more promising than this. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A P #10 Rating: 93 points

A 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A.P. #10 displays a nose of apple, licorice, and honey, comes onto the palate creamy, yet still invigoratingly juicy, with fresh and jellied layers of apple mingled with white raisin, sweet herbal essences and honey. Rare among wines with this degree of ripeness and botrytization, this preserves distinct wet stone and salt mineral notes as part of its rich, long, honeyed, refined, complex and yet fundamentally lip-smacking finish. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A P #8 Rating: 91 points

Next in Haag's line up is a 2005 Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A.P. #8. (To avoid confusions of the sort "How long is 'long gold capsule'?", I have included the A.P. numbers for these wines.) This smells of marzipan, quince preserves, and vanilla cream. In the mouth, it displays a lovely layering of invigoratingly fresh apply fruit and apple skin tartness; quince preserve and apple jelly; creamy nut paste, marzipan, white raisin and honey; and heady florality. Its sweet, long finish positively drips with honey and fruit preserves, even if one can't speak of "elegance" or "delicacy" as with many of the best 2005s. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Rating: 90 points

Haag's 2005 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett smells of apple, honeydew melon, and herbal essences, is delicate, clear-fruited and refreshing, yet concentrated in flavor on the palate, palpably (and measurably) high in extract, yet light in touch. It clings tenaciously and beautifully with ripe apple, vanilla, brown spices, licorice and a hint of wet stone, demonstrating how the rounded, ripe acids of this vintage can still remain efficacious, quenching thirst and arousing one's desire for the next sip even at a high level of residual sugar. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Riesling Rating: 90 points

The basic estate 2005 Riesling, drawing on several communes, is as good a one as Haag has had in many years as well as a sensational value. Scents of rootbeer and licorice suggest Erden (although he did not range that far afield in sourcing) and a juicy and clear, yet surprisingly rich, palate impression combines

apple and melon with the aforementioned sweet root and herb suggestions. A superbly concentrated finish adds brown spices and underlying notes of toasted nuts and wet stone. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese

Rating: **89 points**

The Schloss Lieser 2005 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese smells of spiced apple, talcum powder, honey, vanilla, flowers, and licorice. A juicy, quite sweet, opulently rich and broad palate emphasizes apple and banana tinged with bitter-sweet inner mouth florality. This is almost gaudy now and one has to accept overt sweetness, but there is no denying this wine's intensity nor length of unblemished fruit, spices, and flowers. Astonishingly at first glance, there are no "regular" Auslesen here this year. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Auslese Gold

Capsule A P #7 Rating: **89 points**

Thomas Haag skipped from Spätlese to gold capsule Auslese, a jump he explained was dictated by a similar leap in botrytis and degrees Öchsle. His 2005 Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A.P. #7 smells of white peach, marzipan, and vanilla. Slightly candied on the palate but with amazingly ethereal lightness of touch and honeyed botrytis character, it is rich almost to the point of syrup, but pulls back just in time to reveal genuine wet stone slate character and subtle florality in its honey and vanilla-based finish.

—David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Riesling Spätlese Niederberg Helden Rating: **89 points**

Aromas of nectarine and lime, peach and honey rise from a glass of the 2005 Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Spätlese, a wine whose subtle creaminess and elegant, delicate interplay on the palate of pit fruit and citrus, honey and wet stone lead to a superficially sweet yet delicate, juicy and refreshing finish. Granted, in a few years the extra measure of sweetness will no longer be noticeable and the overall balance and freshness of the wine at that point might be better for it. —David Schildknecht

2005 Schloss Lieser Riesling Kabinett Rating: **87 points**

The generic 2005 Schloss Lieser Riesling Kabinett smells of apple and licorice and offers a satisfyingly juicy, generous palate and finish in which wet stone slate character is clearly in evidence. There is less overall concentration and less ability to buffer high residual sugar than with the estate Riesling sans Prädikat,

but it offers an attractive option for anyone who wants a truly light-weight 2005 of unabashed sweetness. —David Schildknecht

von Hövel

2005 von Hövel Scharzhofberger Riesling Beerenauslese Rating: 96 points

The 2005 Scharzhofberger Riesling Beerenauslese smells intensely of ginger-spiced apple jelly, lemon zest, pungent wood smoke, and kirsch. The creamy, thick palate impression and honeyed cast – like the wines ester-filled, pungent nose – signal an exceedingly full measure of noble rot. For all of its expansive richness and liqueur-like concentration, though, the present T.B.A. does not fail to exhibit subtlety and even delicacy in its finish of ginger, apple, apple pip, cherry pit, honey, citrus zest, salts, and smoke. Incidentally, this ravishing wine – one that combines astonishing richness with refreshment value and that I would not hesitate to cellar for 30 or more years – is being sold off the winery's regular price list, not auctioned. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese

Rating: **95 points**

The surprisingly deeply copper-colored 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese offers noble, truffle-like aspects of botrytis in the nose, along with marrowy meatiness, sweet brown spices, and jammed and caramelized pit fruits. Here is a wine with a profound, indeed mysterious depth, with upswellings of pit fruit (fresh, dried, jammed, and caramelized), citrus, meat, spice and salty mineral flavors mingling on the palate. The finish is based on marrowy, malty low notes, intensely rich pit fruit concentrates, and a marvelously refreshing salty cling. The texture is almost buttery. For all of its viscosity and far-gone botrytization, the core of fresh fruits and salty mineral notes keep this wine startlingly refreshing. Expect it to outlive you. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule (2 Star)

Rating: **93 points**

The “two star” 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule** smells of spiced apple and quince jellies along with a hard-to-specify fresh yeastiness that I associate more with very noble yet subtle botrytis than with fermentative residues. It displays lovely creaminess of texture and honey-drenched orchard fruit flavors on the palate, and a gorgeous finish of apple, quince, gardenia, and spice-studded orange rind. Here is a wine that brilliantly manages to combine the spiciness and honeyed character as well as creaminess of texture ascribable in part to botrytis, with the clarity of fruit, transparency to mineral nuance, and

refinement that accrue to all of the best wines in this year's von Hovel collection. I would not hesitate to cellar it for three decades ... provided of course that you are young enough! —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule (3 Star) Rating: 92 points

The reason for the three stars on the label of von Kunow's 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule ^{***}, he explains, is to drive home the point that this auction lot is a long gold capsule Auslese. (There being, of course, no standardization of capsule length, saying so makes it so!) Intense, high-toned aromas of lemon oil, peach, and kirsch combine with slightly prickly notes of botrytis. The palate impression is one of compressed fruit density and near severity of botrytis concentration. Meaty, musky, malty expressions of ennobled fruit vie with persistent lemon oil, distilled fruit, brine, and a faintly smarting pungency in the voluminous and penetrating finish. Is it simply the case that the beast in this savagely intense wine needs to be soothed by time? I suspect as much. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese (1 Star) Rating: 92 points

A "one star" 2005 Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese* – from von Kunow's oldest vines in this site – smells of poached peaches and pears, then comes onto the palate with polished, creamy texture, rich yet refined peachiness, refreshing citricity, sweet inner mouth florality, a subtle touch of honey, and a satisfying cantus firmus of wet stone slatiness. The finish of this wine focuses into a kind of liqueur-like essence and liquid minerality yet is, all the while, wafting and elegant in presentation, with superb length and subtlety. I cannot recall having tasted a better Scharzhofberger bottling from von Hovel. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Scharzhofberger Riesling Spätlese Feinherb

Rating: **91 points**

Von Kunow's 2005 Scharzhofberger Riesling Spätlese Feinherb offers gorgeous pear, licorice, and peach aromatics, a glossy, silky, refined, and expansive palate full of flower-wreathed and mineral-tinged pit fruits, and an evocative finish full of bitter-sweet pit fruits, fruit pits, flowers, herbs, and slate. With well over 12% alcohol and still 30 grams of residual sugar, this distinctive wine originated in fruit of near-Berenauslese must weight. The balance of residual sugar strikes me as ideal for current consumption – with the impression of sweetness merely subtly supportive of the fruit – but it is really anyone's guess how a wine with this rather unusual analysis and unlike a typical von Hovel Scharzhofberger might age. The

estate Riesling named for von Kunow's ancestor, Balduin, is generally finished quite sweet. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Beerenauslese

Rating: **91 points**

Von Kunow's 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Beerenauslese will probably be auctioned, although no determination had yet been made in this regard at the time when I tasted it. Exhibiting bread-like, meaty, musky aspects of botrytis on the nose, along with salts, lemon oil, and apricot paste, this Beerenauslese takes a sharp turn in the direction of caramelized peach and pear on the palate, maintaining overtones of sweat, musk, and other animalistic manifestations of noble rot. Salty mineral notes help liven the essentially caramelized fruit finish, but there is also a bit of bitterness from the botrytis. The overall level of richness and concentration exhibited here are formidable, but the wine is far less winsome or inscrutable than its sibling from the Scharzhofberg. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Riesling Auslese Oberemmeler Hütte Rating: 90 points

Von Kunow's 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese offers complex scents of flowers, mint, quinine, and poached pear with white raisins. Soft and rich yet delicate and refined, this Riesling disburses pure pear and floral essences all across the palate, finishing with subtle complexity and satisfying sweetness. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese (1 Star)

Rating: **89 points**

The 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese* ("one star") offers apple, white raisin, and spicy botrytis in the nose. Creamy in texture and exhibiting a pleasant juxtaposition of white raisin-studded caramel apple, spiced applesauce, and tart crabapple notes on the palate, this finishes with honeyed richness and attractive spiciness, while sacrificing a bit of sap and juiciness on the altar of noble rot. There are 2,000 liters, but the price will be determined by the VDP Trier auction (over which von Kunow, incidentally, has presided for more than a generation). —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Riesling Spätlese Oberemmeler Hütte Rating: 89 points

The 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Spätlese leads with a honeyed hint of botrytis, along with baked apple and nut oils. In the mouth, for all of the obvious ripeness and the note of botrytis sounded in the nose, this exhibits striking

delicacy and refinement. A light touch to the palate delivers clear, pure apricot fruit tinged by honey and malt. A subtle finishing cling continues the theme of richness-with-delicacy. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Riesling Kabinett Scharzhofberger Rating: 88 points

Von Kunow's 2005 Scharzhofberger Riesling Kabinett smells of pear, quince, and toasted almonds. The wine's piquant palate impression emphasizes nuttiness along with satisfying pit fruit concentration, a hint of caramelization, and a distinctive wet stone minerality. What it might lack in the clarity or poise of its Hütte counterpart, this Scharzhofberger more than makes up for in sheer finishing energy. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Kanzemer Horecker Riesling Auslese (2 Star)

Rating: **88 points**

Von Kunow's 2005 Kanzemer Horecker Riesling Auslese** (labeled and referred to as "two star" due to its richness and intensity, although it is the only Auslese from this monopole in this vintage) offers a tropical and effusively ripe nose of mango, banana, pink grapefruit, and brown spices. Thickly rich, opulent, and ester-rich in the mouth, its ripeness and viscosity suggest a spiced tropical fruit paste. This formatively concentrated wine's intense gaudy tropical fruit and wet stone finish is forceful, but lacks the clarity, refinement, or subtlety of the best wines at von Hovel and just doesn't quite sing. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Spätlese Trocken

Rating: **88 points**

Even though dry wines never seem to have interested von Kunow much, his 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Spätlese trocken – among his earliest-harvested 2005s – represents a fine effort. Aromas of black tea, lemon, and honeydew melon set the stage for a silky-smooth, satisfyingly dense palate informed by melon, tea, and cherry blossom. While quite soft, this preserves fine clarity of fruit and distinctively wet stone slate character in its generous finish. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Riesling Kabinett Oberemmeler Hütte Rating: 87 points

The 2005 Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Kabinett offers aromas of cherry blossom, fresh apple, and licorice and, in the mouth, a surprisingly honeyed and decidedly sweet variation on orchard themes, and finishes with pure, clear, fruit-filled length and plenty of polish. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Riesling Spätlese Scharzhofberger Rating: 87 points

This 2005 Scharzhofberger Riesling Spätlese displays more of a sweet herbal character in the nose than others of the wines tasted here. Hints of rather site-typical ripe peach and subtle slate emerge on the silky palate, with the continuing accompaniment of high-toned herbal essences. Refined and satisfying, this Riesling is nevertheless relatively herbal in focus and demure in length.

—David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Balduin von Hövel Riesling Spätlese Rating: 86 points

Since this year the choice of starting material was Spätlese or Auslese, von Kunow elected to label the wine as 2005 Riesling Spätlese “Balduin von Hovel”. In and of itself – not to mention as a Spätlese for the price of a Q.b.A. – this cherry- and herb-scented, rich, rather sweet Riesling with its honeyed, nutty, cherry- and slate-infused finish offers very good value. —David Schildknecht

2005 von Hövel Scharzhofberger Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese

Rating: (no rating)

The 2005 Scharzhofberger Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese is quite sweaty and animal-scented in the nose, with sharp pungency of smoke and citrus rind. In the mouth, this is quite severe, with persistently prickly, high-toned manifestations of botrytis, dried peach, nut oils, and faintly bitter citrus rind and fungal flavors. A glossy, lush texture helps ameliorate the tendency toward severity and sharpness on exhibit here. An element of sweet spice and of juicy fruit character emerges in the finish, but this seems disproportionately weak in the back given the sheer intensity and volume of the nose and palate. Is this a case of too much botrytis harvested too late? Or does this wine simply need time to get its act together? —David Schildknecht

Zilliken

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese A P #2

Rating: **98 points**

Zilliken’s 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese A.P. #2, boasts Eiswein-like (14 grams per liter) acidity. He would press all night, he says, just to get some juice from the completely shriveled grapes. The nose mingles musk, smoked meats, brown spices, caramel, lemon oil, singed white grapefruit,

distilled plum, as well as exotic wood-like aromas. Fresh, jammed, and caramelized apricot and peach dominate on a palate of striking sheer density, shot through with vivid currents of citricity, yet rich and buffered – with a mocha butter cream element – rather than being at all sharp or strident in overall effect. The more one comes back to this, the more the complexity of the aromas can be followed across the palate, gripping with a profundity of flavors that practically command reverence. And yet, one senses that much of this wine’s mysterious message may yet be missing at this early age. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese A P #1
Rating: **97 points**

The nose of Zilliken’s 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese A.P. #1, which will be auctioned, acts like vinous smelling salts. Candied pineapple, apricot jam and lemon oil are prominent in the nose, and those themes – along with tropical and dried and caramelized pit fruits, lemon meringue, and fresh grapefruit – are carried onto a palate of eszencia-like viscosity and glycerol richness. Yet this wine is not in the least cuddly or plush, it’s formidably dense to the point of firmness and is not the least bit heavy but rather delicate and soaring. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A P #5
Rating: **96 points**

With the 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A.P. #5, an auction cuvee, we enter the realm of Trockenbeerenauslese must weight. A spiritous expression of pit fruits, white raisin, and an ominous smokiness in the nose alerts one to the element of botrytis and to the astonishing level of concentration that follows. One has the impression of an implosion of pineapple, lemon, and grapefruit into an intensely citric, severe focal point that practically sears the palate. The finish is correspondingly long and intense, featuring layers of dried, fresh and caramelized pit fruits, almond paste, lemon meringue, and persistently fresh citrus. This fabulous wine should be well worth cellaring for three to four decades – in other words, longer than most readers need to worry about! —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A P #8
Rating: **95 points**

When it comes to the realm occupied by Zilliken’s extraordinary 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A.P. #8, he readily – indeed gleefully – admits to having produced remarkable volumes. “This #8 is the sort of wine of which one would ordinarily harvest two or three hundred liters,” he explains,

“whereas I harvested 3,700 liters.” Date, dried apricot, grapefruit, and honey aromas set the stage for an intense mouthful of dried pit fruit concentrate, citrus, and honey that exhibits incredible focus, clarity and finishing penetration, yet comes off as gentler than several of the other Auslesen in this collection, with delicacy, refinement and lift, and among great 2005s, must count as a bargain!
—David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A P #7

Rating: **94 points**

The 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule A.P. #7, another auction lot, smells sharply of lemon, mandarin, dried apricot, and white raisin, then comes onto the palate as a creamy, pulpy, palpably extract-rich concentrate of white raisin, caramelized apricot and diverse, brilliantly shimmering citrus. The alternation of baked, dried and caramelized fruits with sharp, fresh citrus is initially almost jarring, but offers the sort of excitement one seeks on a roller coaster. As the wine opens up, it gains in clarity, lift, and delicacy, without sacrificing any of its remarkable intensity. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A P #6

Rating: **94 points**

Zilliken’s 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Long Gold Capsule A.P. #6, exhibits significant botrytis character, woven into a nose that features high-toned apple, marzipan, grapefruit, white raisin, and prickly-spice. Layers of fresh, dried, baked and caramelized fruits, suffused with citrus, honey, and vanilla cream make for a dramatically rich, complex and harmonious mouthful of Riesling. The finish – shot through with bright citricity and underlain by wet stone – rolls forcefully across the palate. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Beerenauslese A P #4

Rating: **94 points**

The 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Beerenauslese A.P. #4, displays aromas of black tea, citrus, brown spices, white raisin, pear nectar, and quince jelly. The palate is buffeted by an almost frighteningly intense wave of tea and pit fruit concentrates but the wine’s striking textural thickness helps buffer the palate. An almost tannic residue of black tea and citrus rind notes persists to the end. It is too early to report in significant detail, but there is no question about this being a fifty year wine and a monument to its vintage. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Beerenauslese A P #3

Rating: **93 points**

The 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Beerenauslese A.P. #3, which will be auctioned, evinces pungent, Eiswein-like scents of radish, lemon oil, brown spices, and white raisin. Amazingly dense and rich but firm in texture on the palate, this grips with fingernails of botrytis bitterness and such blazing intensity that, yet again, we have a wine hard to assess fairly at this stage. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese A P #9 Rating: **93 points**

The 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese A.P. #9 – an auction lot – smells of white peach, pineapple, pink grapefruit, and fig, saturates the palate with a load of those same fruits, then finishes with startling clarity, brightness, and honeyed richness. Almost indescribably intense concentrate though this is, one nevertheless glimpses subtle inflections of flowers, spice, and mineral throughout. This really needs time to calm down, but should be another three decade keeper. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Riesling Spätlese Saarburger Rausch Rating: **92 points**

Only one wine in this year's collection is labeled 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Spätlese (there is no auction cuvee), and it combines fruit from later pickings with several early selections of partially shriveled berries that greatly enhanced the wine's must weight and acidity. A pungent nose of spiced apple, cherry, and white raisin leads into a palate whose creaminess adds allure, while not at all detracting from this Riesling's fundamental delicacy and duty to refresh. Pungent suggestions of apple peel, citrus rind, and slate add counterpoint to a rich yet refined finish of ravishing persistence. I would not hesitate to sock away for up to 25 years one of the roughly 670 cases made of this wine. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese A P #10 Rating: **92 points**

With the 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese A.P. #10 we cross into Beerenauslese territory, and this wine registers considerably more viscosity, creaminess, and sense of extract than its predecessors, yet at the same time evinces a razor's edge of citricity that cuts through its rich layers of purple plum preserve, fresh as well as caramelized apple, and wet stones. Virtually all of this lot – which is clearly a candidate for three decade's of cellaring – was sold to Switzerland. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese A P #11 Rating: 91 points

The 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese A.P. #11, smells of Normandy apple cider, kirsch, and flowers. The palate impression is wafting and delicate despite the wine's near-Beerenauslese must weight, and the long, clear finish is marked by subtle alternations of spiced apple, white raisin, apple skin, and wet stone. This is a model of how concentration and elegance can go hand in hand. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Auslese Rating: 90 points

The 2005 Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Auslese reflects the significant jump in must weight (already here on the border of B.A.), extract and acidity that set in as Zilliken's fruit began to shrivel under the effects of warm, early October breezes. Mango, grapefruit, apple, and white raisin aromas lead to a lush yet bright palate and an intense – if at present rather single-mindedly citric – finish. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Riesling Kabinett Saarburger Rausch Rating: 90 points

The 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Kabinett smells alluringly of cherry and apple blossoms, offers a lovely palate combination of tart red apple skin, sweet cherry flesh, brown spice and wet stones, and finishes with striking refinement, refreshment and delicacy of floral, apple, citrus peel, and mineral notes. As always with the best wines at this address, one would never guess how much residual sugar it is packing, other than to acknowledge its low alcohol and calculate backwards. “Without high residual sugar, you could not have the delicacy,” opines Zilliken, “and the wine would end up tasting like a Spätlese halbtrocken.” I would pick this Kabinett to gain depth yet hold its freshness for at least a decade. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Riesling Kabinett Trocken Saarburger Rausch

Rating: **89 points**

Zilliken's 2005 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Kabinett trocken registers the same 11.5% alcohol as its Q.b.A. counterpart, but here he has captured fruit with a great deal more refinement and inherent complexity. Scents and flavors of cherry, apricot, lime and wet stone, a strikingly creamy even though bright and invigorating palate, and a long finish accented by cherry pit and wet stone are this Riesling's obvious virtues. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Riesling Butterfly A P #17 Rating: 88 points

The latest edition of Zilliken's 3,000-case brand, 2005 Riesling "Butterfly" A.P. #17 – based on fruit of Spätlese and Auslese must weight and finished with 11.5% alcohol – offers lovely sweet cherry, brown spice, and wet stone aromas and flavors, a satiny texture, palpable density, and a striking, roundly rich, judiciously sweet finish of cherry, kumquat, lemon oil, and honey. With his "Butterfly," Zilliken has developed a style of Riesling – neither trocken nor quite dry-tasting, plush in texture, and far from delicate – that is highly versatile and entirely distinct from that of his other wines. A second lot of "Butterfly", A.P. #18 – crafted with the intention of being indistinguishable – is waiting in the wings as #17's successor. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Riesling Kabinett Ockfener Bockstein Rating: 87 points

Zilliken's 2005 Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Kabinett offers site-typical apple blossom, slate and brown spices in the nose, an enveloping fruitiness on the palate, yet also an attractive sense of delicacy and a finish boasting refined floral, orchard fruit, and mineral elements. —David Schildknecht

2005 Zilliken Riesling Trocken Rating: 87 points

No fruit having come in below high-grade Spätlese must weight, Zilliken sacrificed only a small amount of raw material to inform a 2005 Riesling trocken. This wine is mineral from the word "go", with wet stone aromatics, stony inflections to the wines juicy, cidery apple and cherry fruited palate, and a finish with palpable extract. More formidable than charming, it should prove versatile at the dinner table and gain in interest over the next couple of years. —David Schildknecht
